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Conflict, Cohesion, and Child Perceptions: A Moderational model

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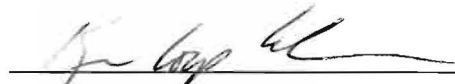
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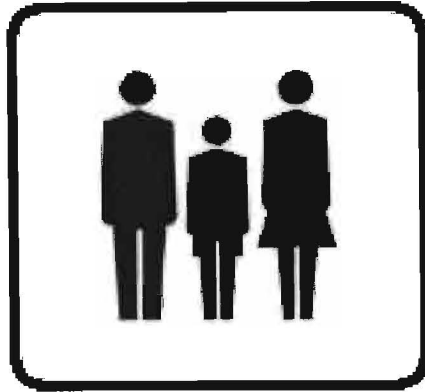
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Conflict, Cohesion, and Child Perceptions: A Moderational Model

Randy D. Bird

Faculty Mentor: Kristina C. Gordon

07 May 2003

Introduction

Exposure to marital conflict is a common source of stress in children's lives, and a plethora of studies have linked interparental conflict with significant emotional and behavioral problems in children (see Grych & Fincham, 1990, for a review), especially externalizing disorders but also internalizing disorders (Holden & Ritchie, 1991; Jouriles et al., 1987). Furthermore, interparental conflict can exacerbate the negative impact of various risk environments such as divorce, and is a stronger factor in many problems in children than is the breakup of a family (Emery, 1988). Indeed, children's reports have indicated that the witnessing of interparental conflict is a very powerful life stressor (Lewis, Siegel, & Lewis, 1984). However, whereas it has been well established that a high level of conflict is associated with a higher level of maladjustment and behavior problems, and that children's appraisals may play a role in this association, the mechanisms determining how conflict shapes children's appraisals of their parents' marriage remain unclear. Since such perceptions are crucial in understanding the effects of marital conflict on children (E.M. Cummings et al., 1989; Emery & O'Leary, 1982; Grych, Seid, & Fincham, 1992; Hetherington et al., 1982; Howes & Markman, 1989), the means by which children arrive at these appraisals must be established. Therefore, rather than looking at children's appraisals of interparental conflict as an intermediate variable between conflict and children's adjustment, this study examined the effects of marital conflict on children's appraisals, specifically exploring whether marital cohesion acts as a moderator of the relationship between interparental conflict and children's perceptions of that conflict.

Over the past two decades, a number of models have been proposed to explain the connections between marital conflict and children's adjustment problems. Grych and Fincham (1990) proposed a cognitive-contextual framework, which suggested that children's appraisals

and overall understanding of interparental conflict mediated the relationship between the conflict and children's adjustment. The model emphasized the role of cognition in children's coping with the existence and intensity of parental conflict. In this model, children engage in primary processing, which involves the initial realization that a stressful event is occurring, followed by the more complicated stage of secondary processing, in which the children attempt to find the cause of the conflict, assign responsibility or blame, produce potential coping responses and ultimately assign meaning to episodes of conflict as either threatening or benign (Bretherton et al., 1986; Grych & Fincham, 1990). In this model, children who see their parents frequently engaging in verbal conflict may blame themselves for their parents' arguing, feel helpless to stop their arguing, and then develop problems such as low self-esteem or depression (Grych & Fincham, 1990).

Whereas the cognitive-contextual framework focused primarily on cognition, Davies and Cummings (1994) proposed a model for the conflict-adjustment relationship based on affective responses. Their emotional security hypothesis emphasized children's sense of emotional well-being as the gateway between conflict and negative adjustment. Suggesting that a number of emotional factors, including attachment style and strategies of coping, are vital factors in children's responses to marital conflict, they supported a functionalist perspective arguing that the goal of the children extends beyond cognition to maintaining emotional security (Davies & Cummings, 1994). According to this model, exposure to marital conflict produces emotional distress in children, which steadily lowers children's overall sense of emotional security, which in turn can cause disruptive behavior problems in children (Davies & Cummings, 1994).

Supporting both models, children's appraisals have been shown to mediate the effects of parental conflict on children's adjustment, with evidence supporting a mediational role for

coping efficacy in boys and self-blame in girls (Cummings, Davies, & Simpson, 1994). However, in more recent research specifically designed for tests of *moderational* effects, evidence has supported the hypothesis that children's appraisals act as moderators of the relationship between interparental conflict and children's adjustment (Kerig, 1998; Rossman & Rosenberg, 1992). It is important to recall that mediators and moderators are two conceptually distinct variables. While mediators play a causal role between the independent and dependent variables, moderators influence the degree or direction of the relationship between two variables, but have no causal role (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Despite this evidence regarding the link between marital conflict and children's adjustment and behavior problems, there has been far less investigation into possible intermediate variables between marital conflict and the children's appraisals of that conflict. If the presence of conflict alone does not directly lead to negative appraisals or a threat to emotional security in children, then the intermediate factors must be ascertained and integrated into the conflict-adjustment paradigm.

While previous findings have indicated that an increase in frequency and intensity of parental conflict influences children's negative reports (Cummings, Zahn-Walker, & Radke-Yarrow, 1981; Davies & Cummings, 1994; Emery, 1982; Emery & O'Leary, 1984), there also is evidence that the effects can be buffered if children sense that some resolution of the marital conflict has been reached (E.M. Cummings et al., 1989). Other literature has cited positive communication skills on the part of both parents as aiding in children's security of attachment (Howes & Markman, 1989). These findings suggest that there are factors other than the conflict itself to consider in the relationship between marital conflict and child adjustment. It is also important to note that, in any marriage, conflict cannot be avoided, and that it is possible for

some couples to have frequent disputes, yet also to be comfortable with their disagreements, and continue to function effectively as a cohesive unit (Davies & Cummings, 1994). Thus, even if parents frequently are verbally aggressive toward each other, if they have high levels of cohesion and are able to work through their disputes, the negative effects of the conflict on their children are likely to be minimized.

Given the buffering effects that positive actions parents may take can have on children's negative perceptions, it seems apparent that children are able to analyze, and not just absorb, parental conflict. Older children, in particular, are more able to discern more subtle forms of conflict and also to realize its possible consequences, and are also aware of contextual factors in conflict (E.M. Cummings et al., 1989; Grych & Fincham, 1990). Therefore, in investigating the effects of marital conflict on children, it is important that families' reports accurately reflect what the children experience. Children's appraisals have been shown to be better predictors of adjustment than are parents' reports (Emery & O'Leary, 1982; Grych, Seid, & Fincham, 1992). Similarly, the level of exposure to parental conflict has been linked to adjustment problems in children, meaning that a couple's "encapsulated conflict," during which the children are not present, has not been linked with children's behavior problems (Hetherington et al., 1982). With the children's presence necessary for conflict to affect them, it is clear that the children's perceptions of conflict must be used when looking at the effects of that conflict on children.

To that end, Grych, Seid, and Fincham (1992) created a reliable self-report measure specifically aimed at obtaining an overall assessment of children's perceptions of interparental conflict. This measure assesses children's perceptions of self-blame for parents' arguments, perceived threat to self, and destructiveness of parental conflict. Numerous studies have confirmed that frequent, intense, and unresolved conflicts are related to maladjustment and that

perceived threat and self-blame are related to anger and sadness in children (Cummings & Davies, 1994; Grych, Seid, & Fincham, 1992; Grych & Fincham, 1993). The present study examined children's reports of perceived threat and stability, based on Grych et al.'s (1992) measure, and attempts to explain the mechanisms by which interparental conflict shapes those feelings.

With resolution and good communication skills already supported as buffering effects on children's immediate perceptions of conflict, it seems reasonable that parents who, during and after episodes of conflict, are able to demonstrate through their words and actions that the conflict does not mean that they do not love each other, will lessen the negativity of their children's appraisals of the conflict. It is proposed that children who witness interparental conflict in the context of a cohesive marital dyad may not appraise it negatively. Therefore, this study looks at dyadic cohesion, defined by a strong dyadic union and the sharing of common interests (Spanier, 1976), as a potential moderator between marital conflict and negative children's perceptions. Rather than using children's appraisals as a midpoint between conflict and children's adjustment, this study looked the effects of conflict on children's appraisals, with dyadic cohesion acting as a buffer. Specifically, it is hypothesized that first, in line with earlier research, high levels of self-reported verbal aggression, in both mothers and fathers, will be positively associated with high levels of child instability and perceived threat. Second, dyadic cohesion will moderate the relationship between interparental verbal aggression and children's perceived threat and instability. That is, there will be a significant interaction effect between verbal aggression and dyadic cohesion. It is predicted that children whose parents report high levels of dyadic cohesion in the marriage, versus children whose parents report low levels of cohesion, will experience lower levels of threat to self and to family relationships as well as

higher levels of stability, even when faced with episodes of verbal conflict between parents.

Method

Participants

Participants were 106 mothers, fathers, and their 11- to 18-year-old children (54 boys, 52 girls) from 2-parent families, including 10 stepfather families and 2 stepmother families, living in a medium-sized Southeastern city. Of these families, 100 described themselves as Caucasian, 4 as African-American, 1 Asian and 1 Hispanic. Fathers and mothers had a mean education level of 15 years and mean ages of 43 and 41, respectively. Couples had been married an average of 16.0 years (range = 1 to 31 years). Yearly family income averaged \$65,000 (range = \$10,000 to over \$250,000). According to data from the 2000 Census, the sample recruited for this study was very similar to the overall population in this metropolitan area (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

Procedure

Families were recruited by flyers posted in the community, and by mailed letters and telephone calls using a mailing list purchased by the investigators as part of a larger ongoing longitudinal study. Flyers and letters indicated that the study concerned marital and family functioning, and that each participating family would be compensated for the first phase of the study with a gift card to Wal-Mart worth \$25, and described compensation for further reports later in the longitudinal study. Approximately one week after the initial recruitment letter was postmarked, each family was contacted via telephone. Phone-screening criteria included: (a) the man and woman of the household were legally married; (b) there was at least one child between ages of 11 and 18 living in the home; (c) parents and children were native English speakers.

After agreeing to participate in the study, each family was mailed one large envelope, inside which were three small manila envelopes, labeled “mother,” “father,” and “child,” each of which contained the appropriate questionnaires, and one larger self-addressed stamped manila envelope. Participants were instructed to complete their packets privately and to seal the completed papers in their respective envelopes in order to ensure each family member’s privacy and to reduce the possible influence of confounding effects (e.g. social desirability) on each person’s responses. Upon completion, participants were to put the sealed packets into the larger envelope and mail it back to the investigators.

Measures

Marital verbal aggression. Verbal aggression between spouses was assessed by mothers’ and fathers’ reports on the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS; Straus, 1979). The CTS is a 13-item scale that yields three scales reflecting various behaviors during marital conflicts across the past year, including scales of marital reasoning, verbal aggression, and physical aggression. Items tapping these tactics are rated on a continuum of frequencies, ranging from 0 to 6 for the past year. The CTS has been shown to have adequate reliability, concurrent validity, and construct validity (Straus, 1979). Since the present study is investigating marital conflict, the verbal aggression subscale was used, scored as the sum of frequency and intensity of interspousal verbal aggression, with higher scores indicating higher levels of conflict. Straus (1979) reported a coefficient alpha of .88 on the verbal aggression subscale. Coefficient alphas in the present study’s sample were .87 for husbands and .80 for wives.

Marital dyadic cohesion. Dyadic cohesion was assessed by a subscale of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976). Fathers’ and mothers’ independent ratings of their

marriage were obtained on this 32-item scale. The DAS has demonstrated high reliability and validity, including internal consistency for its subscales, by its high correlations to similar marital measures. The present study utilizes only the ratings for the Dyadic Cohesion subscale, which is defined by how well the couple works together as a unified team when solving problems and the extent to which they share interests and ideas. Higher scores indicate a higher level of cohesion. Spanier (1976) reported coefficient alphas of .96 for the DAS, and .86 for the Dyadic Cohesion subscale. Husbands' and wives' coefficient alphas for the Dyadic Cohesion subscale were .80 and .85, respectively, and their Pearson correlation was .46 ($p < .001$).

Children's Perceived Threat. All children's reports were obtained from subscales of the Children's Perceptions of Interparental Conflict questionnaire (CPIC; Grych, Seid, & Fincham, 1992). The 48-item scale presents children with statements regarding their feelings about interparental conflict, which load onto three main factors: Conflict Properties, Threat, and Self-Blame. The children are asked to rate each statement as *true* (2), *sort of true* (1), or *false* (0). The CPIC has demonstrated adequate internal consistency, with coefficient alphas well above the recommended .70 level, as well as acceptable test-retest correlations. Comparison to measures of parent-rated marital conflict and child adjustment has also demonstrated acceptable concurrent and criterion validity in the CPIC. Perceived threat is defined by the extent to which the child is worried that physical or emotional harm will be done by a parent to the child or to the other parent during an episode of conflict, and is measured by the sum of the scores on the relevant CPIC items. In this study, coefficient alphas on the Perceived Threat subscale were .83 for boys and .85 for girls.

Children's Instability. One of the nine dimensions of interparental conflict being assessed by the CPIC is stability. Instability, with respect to interparental conflict, is the degree

to which the child believes that the parents do not truly love each other and that their marriage is characterized by bitterness and an inability to get along (Grych, Seid, & Fincham, 1992). Scores from relevant items were summed to give a total stability score, with a high score indicating low stability and a low score indicating high stability. In this study, coefficient alphas for the Stability subscale were .88 for boys and .77 for girls.

Results

Table 1 contains the means and standard deviations for the marital and child measures. In *t* tests comparing boys' and girls' scores on reports of interparental conflict, no statistically significant differences were indicated. Thus, boys' and girls' reports are analyzed together as "children's" reports in the present study.

Relationships Between Marital Conditions and Child Perceptions

Bivariate correlations between marital properties and child perceptions are displayed in Table 2. As predicted, verbal aggression as reported by both mothers and fathers significantly correlated with perceived threat and instability. In addition, mothers' reports of dyadic cohesion correlated significantly with both perceived threat and instability in the children. However, fathers' reports of dyadic cohesion were not significantly linked with children's perceived threat or instability. Mothers' verbal aggression also showed a strong negative correlation with dyadic cohesion, whereas fathers' verbal aggression was uncorrelated with cohesion.

To test predictive value of verbal aggression, multiple regression analyses were performed. Results testing aggression as a predictor of instability and perceived threat are displayed in Tables 3a and 3b, respectively. As predicted, verbal aggression significantly

predicted children's instability for both mothers and fathers, with fathers' aggression being a particularly strong predictor (see Table 3b). Fathers' verbal aggression was also a significant predictor of children's perceived threat. However, mothers' verbal aggression did not predict perceived threat, despite their significant Pearson correlation.

Cohesion as a Moderating Variable

Scores for verbal aggression and dyadic cohesion for both mothers and fathers were centered to reduce multicollinearity among predictor variables in the regression equation (Aiken & West, 1991). Multiple regression analyses were performed to assess the relative importance of verbal aggression in predicting perceived threat and instability, dyadic cohesion in predicting threat and instability, and the interaction between verbal aggression and dyadic cohesion in predicting threat and instability.

Data analyses reveal partial support for the hypothesis that dyadic cohesion acts as a moderator between marital verbal aggression and negative children's perceptions. Results of regression analyses are displayed in Tables 3a and 3b. As predicted, the interaction between verbal aggression and dyadic cohesion for mothers was significant in predicting children's instability ($R^2 = .296$, $F(3, 92) = 12.88$, $p < .001$) and marginally significant in predicting perceived threat ($R^2 = .225$, $F(3, 92) = 8.91$, $p < .001$), suggesting that a high level of cohesion buffers the negative effects of mothers' marital verbal aggression on children. However, contrary to expectations, the interaction between fathers' verbal aggression and dyadic cohesion was not a significant predictor of perceived threat ($R^2 = .053$, $F(3, 94) = 1.74$, $p = .16$) or instability ($R^2 = .193$, $F(3, 94) = 7.50$, $p < .001$) in children.

To further explore these findings, the interaction effect between verbal aggression and

dyadic cohesion was decomposed. New predicted means were generated for dyadic cohesion scores at high and low levels of the cohesion variable (1 SD above and below the mean) (Aiken & West, 1991; Cohen & Cohen, 1983). Results for mothers' decomposed interaction effect predicting instability and perceived threat are presented in Tables 4a and 4b, respectively. This analysis revealed that at a high level of dyadic cohesion (1 SD above the mean), the interaction effect between verbal aggression and cohesion was a stronger predictor of children's instability and perceived threat than at a low level of cohesion (1 SD below the mean), suggesting that a high level of cohesion has a buffering effect on children's negative perceptions, even when mothers are being verbally aggressive towards fathers.

Discussion

Marital Aspects and Negative Children's Perceptions

Correlations between verbal aggression and perceived threat, as well as between verbal aggression and instability, support the hypothesis that these variables are highly associated. Regression analyses showed mothers' and fathers' verbal aggression both predicted children's instability. Furthermore, fathers' verbal aggression also predicted children's perceived threat, but mothers' verbal aggression, despite having a stronger correlation to perceived threat, did not significantly predict threat.

These findings lend support to the hypothesis that marital verbal aggression and negative children's perceptions are linked. Despite the lack of significant predictive value for mothers' verbal aggression on perceived threat, there remains enough evidence matching previous findings that marital conflict has a deleterious effect on children (e.g. Davies & Cummings, 1994; Holden & Ritchie, 1991; Jouriles et al., 1987).

It is possible that parents' gender differences are responsible for the lack of predictive strength for mothers' verbal aggression on children's perceived threat. Previous research has shown that, given an increase in fathers' aggressive marital behavior, children showed increases in anger, sadness, and fear, but an increase in mothers' aggressive behavior did not elicit similar responses (Crockenberg & Langrock, 2001).

It is also important to note that, whereas mothers' cohesion showed a strong negative correlation with both perceived threat and instability, fathers' cohesion did not significantly correlate with either variable. Also, for mothers, verbal aggression and dyadic cohesion were strongly negatively associated, but fathers again showed no significant difference. For women, it appears that a cohesive marriage may be associated with a lack of verbal aggression on their part, whereas men may be more prone to use verbal aggression (Crockenberg & Langrock, 2001) without seeing it as a threat to the marriage's cohesiveness. As the present study did not directly test this hypothesis, the true magnitude of the difference between husbands and wives regarding these aspects should be examined further.

Dyadic Cohesion's Role in Children's Perceptions

The present study hypothesized that dyadic cohesion acts as a moderator between marital verbal aggression and negative children's perceptions. Analyses showed partial support for that hypothesis, with the moderational model supported by mothers' data but not by fathers'. The interaction effect between mothers' verbal aggression and dyadic cohesion was a strong predictor of children's instability and a marginally significant predictor of perceived threat. Furthermore, decomposition of the dyadic cohesion variable showed that a high level of cohesion buffered the effects of mothers' verbal aggression on children's negative perceptions. Thus, it seems likely

that, even in the presence of mothers' verbal aggression toward fathers, children who see their parents' marriage as highly cohesive may experience less negative affect and, therefore, may exhibit fewer behavioral problems.

The absence of a significant interaction effect between fathers' verbal aggression and dyadic cohesion, however, was unexpected and does not support the moderational model proposed by the present study. Although fathers' verbal aggression significantly predicted both instability and threat in children, fathers' dyadic cohesion was not correlated with either variable and did not buffer the negative effects of fathers' aggression. This finding may be a reflection of previous research which has suggested that children respond differently to fathers' aggression than mothers' (Crockenberg & Langrock, 2001; J.S. Cummings et al., 1989). For example, fathers may be prone to yell louder than mothers or may be more likely to leave the marriage. It is also possible that children may assign blame for conflict on fathers more so than on mothers (Crockenberg & Langrock, 2001; Grych, 1998). Therefore, children may find fathers' verbal aggression uniformly threatening, regardless of dyadic context.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations of the present study should be noted when considering these results. First, the data collected came entirely from self-report measures outside of a controlled setting. Packets containing measures were mailed to participating families, who completed the measures at their convenience. Although they were instructed to answer truthfully and confidentially, it is possible that participants may have withheld sensitive information because of social desirability. It is also important to note that the data in the present study, although part of a larger ongoing longitudinal study, are cross-sectional and correlational and thus cannot be used to imply

causality. An additional concern is the sample involved. This study lacked a racially and socioeconomically diverse sample of married couples, with Caucasian, middle-class, well-educated families comprising a vast majority of participants. Consequently, these results should be generalized with caution to other populations. However, this sample is representative of the local population from which it was drawn.

Additionally, this study found evidence suggesting that children respond differently to mothers and fathers. Unfortunately, the measures used do not ask children to evaluate responses to each parent, only to “my parents.” Thus, gender differences in the effects of marital verbal aggression on children’s perceptions cannot be directly tested. Future investigations should measure children’s responses to acts of each parent and directly test possible gender differences.

Aside from limitations in data collection and generalizability, the moderational model proposed in this study can represent only a piece of the relationship between marital conflict and negative children’s perceptions. It was the goal of the present study to establish that there are intervening variables between the presence of verbal conflict in a marriage and children’s negative appraisals. This study does not claim that dyadic cohesion is the only such moderator.

Clearly, understanding how marital conflict affects children requires an understanding of how spouses interact with each other. The present study has shown that mothers’ reports of dyadic cohesion can reduce the negative appraisals by children during episodes of conflict, and has suggested that fathers’ feelings of cohesion may not have the same reassuring effects on children. Clearly, a more in-depth investigation into the roles each parent plays in shaping children’s attitudes and behaviors is necessary to understand this complex relationship.

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Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations

Variable	N	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Mother-reported marital aspects			
Verbal aggression (CTS)	99	7.9	4.8
Dyadic cohesion (DAS)	102	15.2	4.2
Father-reported marital aspects			
Verbal aggression (CTS)	98	8.2	5.6
Dyadic cohesion (CTS)	106	15.5	3.7
Child-reported perceptions of conflict			
Perceived threat (CPIC)	106	8.6	2.9
Instability (CPIC)	106	4.7	1.5

Note. CTS = Conflict Tactics Scale; DAS = Dyadic Adjustment Scale; CPIC = Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict scale.

Table 2

Intercorrelations Among Marital and Child Variables

	Mothers'	Fathers'	Fathers'	Children's	Children's
	DAS	CTS	DAS	Threat	Instability
Mothers' CTS	-.40***	.57***	-.32***	.31**	.40***
Mothers' DAS		-.42***	.46***	-.40***	-.31***
Fathers' CTS			-.11	.23*	.41***
Fathers' DAS				-.05	-.16
Children's Threat					.51***

Note. CTS = Verbal Aggression subscale of Conflict Tactics Scale; DAS = Dyadic Cohesion subscale of Dyadic Adjustment Scale.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 3a

Regression Analyses Predicting Children's Instability

Fathers' Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>β</i>
Verbal aggression	.12	.03	.42***
Dyadic cohesion	-.04	.04	-.09
Verbal aggression x Dyadic cohesion	-.01	.01	-.10

Note. $R^2 = .193$. $F(3, 94) = 7.50$. $p < .001$.

Mothers' Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>β</i>
Verbal aggression	.08	.03	.23*
Dyadic cohesion	-.07	.04	-.18
Verbal aggression x Dyadic cohesion	-.02	.01	-.34***

Note. $R^2 = .296$. $F(3, 92) = 12.88$. $p < .001$.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 3b

Regression Analyses Predicting Children's Perceived Threat

Fathers' Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>β</i>
Verbal aggression	.12	.06	.23*
Dyadic cohesion	-.01	.08	-.02
Verbal aggression x Dyadic cohesion	.00	.01	-.002

Note. $R^2 = .053$. $F(3, 94) = 1.74$. $p = .16$.

Mothers' Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>β</i>
Verbal aggression	.07	.06	.12
Dyadic cohesion	-.23	.07	-.33***
Verbal aggression x Dyadic cohesion	-.02	.01	-.19 [†]

Note. $R^2 = .225$. $F(3, 92) = 8.91$. $p < .001$.

[†] $p = .054$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 4a

Regression Analyses Predicting Children's Instability Using Mothers' Decomposed Dyadic Cohesion Variable (1 SD above and below the mean)

Mothers' Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>
High Condition (1 SD above mean)			
Verbal aggression	-.01	.05	-.03
Dyadic cohesion (High)	-.07	.04	-.18
Verbal aggression x Dyadic cohesion (High)	-.02	.01	-.49***
Low Condition (1 SD below mean)			
Verbal aggression	.17	.04	.50***
Dyadic cohesion (Low)	-.07	.04	-.18
Verbal aggression x Dyadic cohesion (Low)	-.02	.01	-.36***

Note. $R^2 = .296$. $F(3, 92) = 12.88$. $p < .001$.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 4b

Regression Analyses Predicting Children's Perceived Threat Using Decomposed Mothers' Dyadic Cohesion Variable (1 SD above and below the mean)

Mothers' Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>
High Condition (1 SD above mean)			
Verbal aggression	-.02	.09	-.03
Dyadic cohesion (High)	-.23	.07	-.33***
Verbal aggression x Dyadic cohesion (High)	-.02	.01	-.27 [†]
Low Condition (1 SD below mean)			
Verbal aggression	.17	.07	.27*
Dyadic cohesion (Low)	-.23	.07	-.33***
Verbal aggression x Dyadic cohesion (Low)	-.02	.01	-.20 [†]

Note. $R^2 = .225$. $F(3, 92) = 8.91$. $p < .001$.

[†] $p = .054$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.